

Message Text

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PAGE 01 SEOUL 00589 210935Z

ACTION EA-09

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EO 11652: N/A

TAGS: SOPN PFOR US KS

SUBJ: KOREAN REACTION TO PRESIDENT CARTER'S INAUGURATION

SUMMARY: KOREAN MEDIA GAVE HEAVY COVERAGE TO CARTER INAUGURATION.

EDITORIAL TOOK OCCASION TO ACKNOWLEDGE TROOP WITHDRAWAL EVENTU-

ALLY INEVITABLE BUT REITERATED CONCERN WITH PRESENT THREAT.

PARTY SPOKESMAN ISSUED CAUTIOUSLY OPTIMISTIC STATEMENTS.

1. ON JANUARY 21, KOREAN VERNACULAR PRESS GAVE TOP COVERAGE TO PRESIDENT CARTER'S INAUGURATION. FRONT PAGES TYPICALLY INCLUDED LEAD STORY FROM WASHINGTON CORRESPONDENT RECOUNTING CEREMONY AND INAUGURAL PARADE, SUMMARY OF INAUGURAL ADDRESS, PORTION OF CARTER'S SPECIAL MESSAGE TO NATIONS OF WORLD, AND PICTURE OF CARTER TAKING OATH OF OFFICE. INSIDE PAGES CARRIED FULL TEXT OF CARTER'S INAUGURAL ADDRESS WITH ALL ITS REFERENCES TO HUMAN RIGHTS AND BACKGROUND ARTICLES ON CARTER CABINET AND WHITE HOUSE STAFF.

2. THREE OF AFTERNOON PAPERS RAN EDITORIALS. TONGA ILGO SAID CARTER IS LIKELY TO BE CAUTIOUS AND "SEEK PHASED
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IMPROVEMENT OF STATUS QUO THROUGH COMPROMISES RATHER THAN ...RAPID CHANGE OF EXISTING US "POLICY" AND "LEAN TOWARD PROTECTIONISM." "OUR GREATEST CONCERN IS NEW ADMINISTRATION'S POLICY TOWARD U.S. FORCES IN KOREA (USFK).... WE RECONIZE SOMEDAY THERE WILL BE A CHANGE, BUT CONSTANTLY RAISING THE ISSUE WILL EXERT A BAD INFLUENCE ON THE COUNTRIES CONCERNED AND NEIGHBORING

ALLIES... CARTER SHOULD NOT DISCUSS USFK PULLOUT AND ROK SECURITY WITH THIRD NATIONS PRIOR TO CONSULTATION WITH ROKG, TO HELP STRENGTHEN CREDIBILITY AND MUTUAL RESPECT BETWEEN ROK AND U.S."

3. SEMI-OFFICIAL KYONGHYANG SINMUN ALSO NOTED PRESENCE OF USFK NOT PERMANENT, BUT ADDED "WE HOPE FOR USFK PULLOUT ONLY AFTER SIGNING OF ROK-NK NON-AGGRESSION PACT," MORE GENERAL PIECE IN CHUNGANG ILBO NOTED, "IT MAY BE EASY FOR CARTER TO PROMISE REMOVAL OF ALLNUKES AND POLICY OF MORALITY, BUT THEY WILL BE DIFFICULT TO REALIZE."

4. AFTERNOON PAPERS ALSO PICKED UP STATEMENTS OF ORK POLITICAL PARTY SPOKESMEN. ALL EXTENDED HEARTY CONGRATULATIONS DRP SAID "WE HOPE HE WILL CONTRIBUTE TO ROK SECURITY," YUJONGHOE, "WE HOPE FOR WIDENED DIALOGUE AND COOPERATION AMONG US AND DEVELOPING NATIONS," AND OPPOSITION NDP, "WE EXPECT THAT PENDING PROBLEMS BETWEEN US AND ROK WILL BE SETTLED AS SOON AS POSSIBLE AND OUR OPINION ON WITHDRAWAL OF USFK WILL BE RESPECTED."
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Message Attributes

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Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
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